



The National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) has published “Lifelong Learning in Korea” since 2013. This is to share Korean lifelong education projects and cases with policy makers, researchers, experts, and practitioners from all over the world. NILE wishes to contribute to the development of lifelong learning in the international community by sharing the vision and efforts for the promotion of Korean lifelong education. As the first issue of 2014, projects for ‘working and learning together’ will be introduced.

For Working and Learning Together

• • • Introduction

The global economic paradigm has shifted from “knowledge” to “creativity” in which local cities, business and people are to create new values and ideas. The participation of adult learners in higher education is crucial to creative economy, but the gap of educational attainment among generations has been consistently widened. For example, 65% of those aged 25 to 34 got college education, whereas only 12.8% of those aged 55 to 64 participated in higher education. It has increased the need of expanding the function of colleges into comprehensive education institutes for lifelong learning. Moreover, as an aging society becomes a universal phenomenon, it needs to construct the educational system and infrastructure that are compatible with an aging society. According to the 2013 OECD Factbook, the average employment rate of the elderly (aged 55–64) among OECD countries is 54.4% when compared to 62.1% in Korea. In spite of the relative high rate of elderly employment, there is still the need to supplement the infrastructure to support an individual’s lifelong or transformative learning. This learning can help an individual set a reemployment plan or start a new business for one’s second phase of life right after one’s early or regular retirement.



Over the past five decades, Korean industries have gone through fast and fundamental changes. While the government focused on cultivating labor-intensive export industries back in the 1960s, today's industrial landscape is dominated by the growth of convergence and knowledge industries based on IT and the Internet. Such a rapid transformation of the industrial environment called for greater cooperation between industries and academia. College education which failed to reflect the needs of industries was blamed for the low employment rate of fresh graduate from colleges. As such, it is important to develop curriculums which enable students to catch

up faster with the demands of industrial fields coping with the drastic changes of industrial environment.

In response to such social changes and demands, the Ministry of Education of Korea has proposed the 3rd National Lifelong Learning Promotion Plan (2013~2017) in September 2013, which aims to build a national lifelong learning system so as to improve people's quality of life in the age of 100 year lifespan. This plan has started its full-fledged implementation this year. The basic concept of the plan is to establish a comprehensive on & offline system for lifelong learning, whereby various educational institutions are founded to serve people in different life cycle, social classes, and regions. And all people can have easy access to education anytime anywhere. The 3rd National Lifelong Learning Promotion Plan was designed to let people lead a happy life through creative lifelong



learning. One of its key components is the college-based lifelong learning system so that working, learning, and competency development can be interconnected. As such, colleges are the main pillar of the “establishment of the national lifelong learning system” which is one of the key policy tasks of the Park Geun-hye Administration.

When President Park received a work report from the Ministry of Education in March 2013 after inauguration, she emphasized the role of colleges in providing lifelong education. She said colleges should play an active role in expanding access to the lifelong education system. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education has pushed ahead with the “project to promote college-based lifelong learning system” in order to make colleges take the lead in increasing Koreans’ lifelong education rate to the OECD average (40.4%) by providing lifelong education programs to people in various life-cycle and social classes, thus helping them with employment. In addition, the Ministry of Labor is implementing the “working-learning dual system” in order to build a lifelong learning society by cultivating talents needed at industrial fields.





Project to promote College-Based Lifelong Learning System

The 3rd National Lifelong Learning Promotion Plan consists of four elements; 1) college-based lifelong learning system, 2) on & offline total supporting system for lifelong learning, 3) customized lifelong learning for social cohesion, and 4) reinforcement of learning capacity of local communities. In the first element ‘college-based lifelong learning system’, main tasks include transforming college system so as to serve adult learners, strengthening the role of regional colleges in lifelong education and reinforcing links between learning and certification based on the National Competency Standards. The key direction of those tasks is to make college system, which has been centered on school-age students and academic learning, more friendly to adult learners. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education and National Institute for Lifelong Education implemented the ‘project to promote college-based lifelong learning system’ to transform the existing college system into “open colleges friendly to adult learners”, thus help adult learners continue self-development and improve work competency. The initiative seeks to redesign regional colleges into the convergence centers for creative learning and develop lifelong education programs customized to regional needs, thereby converting colleges into the hub of education necessary for the vitalizations of local economies and cultivation of creative talents



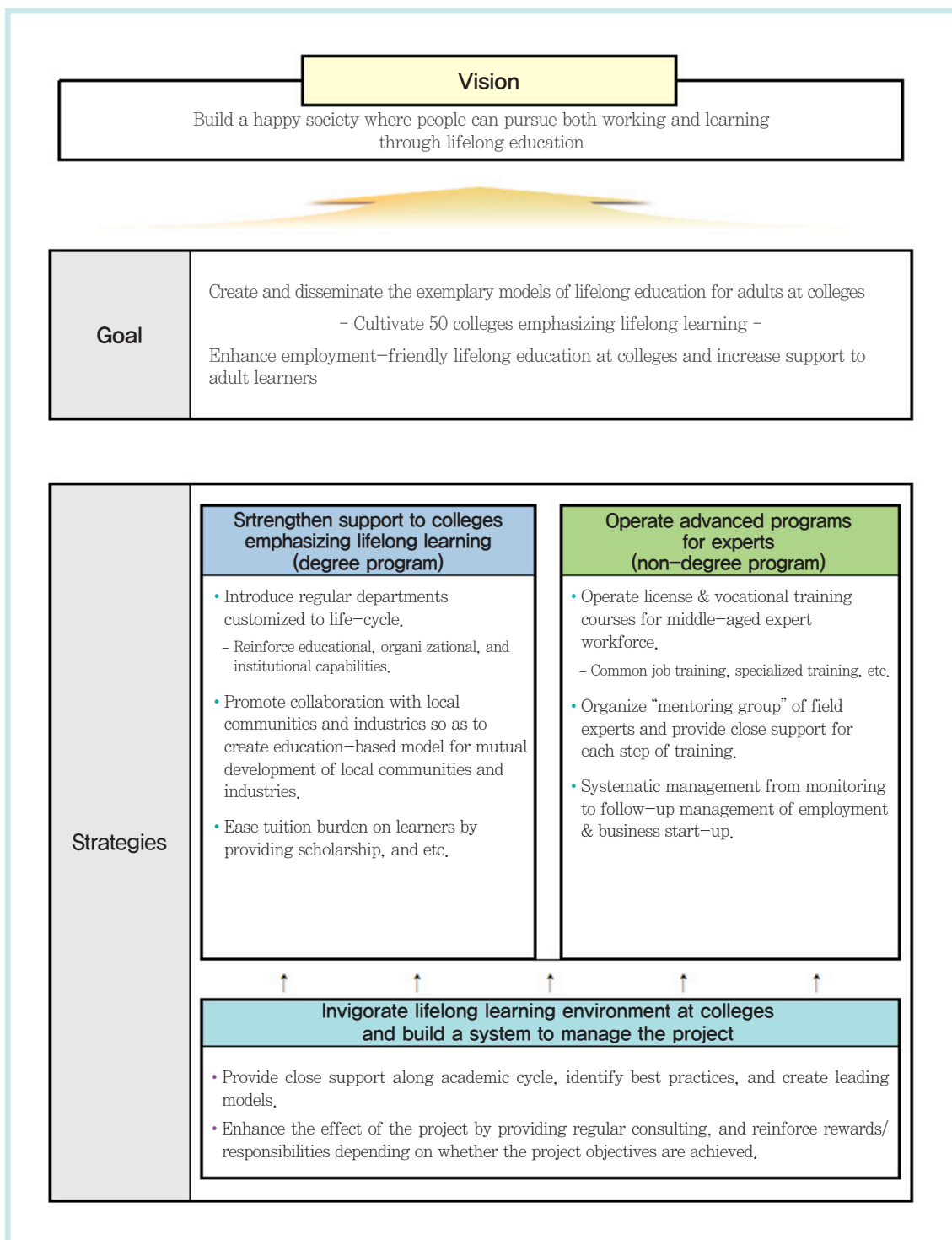
in regions. To that end, college systems from student recruitment to curriculums and classes will be operated in a more flexible manner, so that adult learners can enroll in colleges and pursue continuous self-development and work competency improvement.



The focus of this project, when it was first launched in 2008, was to operate lifelong education programs at colleges, but since 2012 more weight has been placed on introducing academic courses for adult learners to acquire degrees in consideration of the types of education needed by adult learners. Particularly in 2013, the budget for the project was increased by over 5 times compared to 2012, thus gave a boost to the transformation of colleges to become more friendly to adult learners and to establish a more strict performance management system.

In 2013, the project was implemented in two ways; First was the initiative to cultivate ‘colleges emphasizing on lifelong learning’, which aimed to make college system more friendly to adult learners and provide education services customized to life-cycle. Second was ‘advanced programs for experts’ which help baby boomers to develop job competency and start a new career life, which was one of key tasks pursued by the government. The vision and strategies of the project are on the Figure 1.

While both of them aimed to strengthen the lifelong education capabilities of colleges, the former focused on introducing degree courses for adult learners and the latter sought to provide non-degree courses to help baby boomers with employment or business start-up, which was led by National Institute for Lifelong Education.



[Figure 1] Vision and strategies of the ‘project to promote college-based lifelong learning system’ (2013)



College-Based Lifelong Learning Initiative

This initiative was designed to reinforce colleges' capabilities to provide lifelong education customized to people's life-cycle and reduce educational burdens on learners. The key direction of the initiative is to establish the so called "work competency improvement" programs to help people in their 20s~30s acquire field experiences and theoretical knowledge, and improve curriculums accordingly. For people in their 40s~50s, convergence & business start-up departments will be established so that they can prepare for a new start in life and curriculums will be accordingly. There are four key areas to support under the initiative as follows;

Category	Support
Ease tuition burden on learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce learners' tuition burden (provide scholarship) and pay for their school texts • Introduce admission procedures exclusive to adult learners (recruitment within student quota + additional recruitment)
Strengthen educational capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new departments : 2~3 departments (new or modified from existing departments) • Develop & operate curriculums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Field-oriented courses: Curriculums based on the national competency standards – Adult learners' courses : Specialized programs such as regular degree courses, supplementary learning courses, etc.
Strengthen organizational capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Faculty) Recruit competent professors and instructors, introduce appropriate evaluation and compensation systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage full-time professors, hire instructors who have work experiences in industries and experts, develop teaching methodologies, etc. • (Dedicated organization) Assign staff dedicated to adult learners and clarify job descriptions • (Cooperation network) Build network among colleges-industries-local governments
Strengthen institutional capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Faculty) Recruit competent professors and instructors and develop their capabilities, introduce appropriate evaluation and compensation systems • (Dedicated organization) Assign staff dedicated to adult learners and clarify job descriptions • (Cooperation network) Build network among colleges-industries-local governments

[Table 1] Key support activities under the initiative to promote college-based lifelong learning system



Colleges which are selected through evaluation may join the initiative and colleges across the nation may apply for evaluation in order to take part in the initiative. Key evaluation items are the appropriateness of student recruitment plan, the feasibility of department establishment plan, plans to provide scholarships and other tuition support to learners, plans to improve education, organization, system, and etc.



Non-degree advanced programs for experts

The purpose of “non-degree advanced programs for experts” is to provide middle-aged expert workforce including baby boomers with educational programs to help them acquire licenses and find jobs, in an effort to link education and employment. The key activity is to develop and operate educational courses useful to employment, such as basic vocational training, specialized education and field-based job training, so that at least 25% learners can find jobs after completing the courses. The training courses may be classified into three categories; employment, business start-up, and overseas employment. Employment courses, which are designed to help learners find jobs, provides education customized to the needs of local governments and companies, and link them with job search, and assist learners to find jobs befitting their aptitude. Business start-up courses educate learners on starting one’s own business out of creative ideas and develop new jobs such as learning-based jobs, so as to help learners enter the labor market. Lastly, overseas employment courses are provided to experienced workers in such fields as manufacturing, IT and engineering so that they can find jobs overseas.

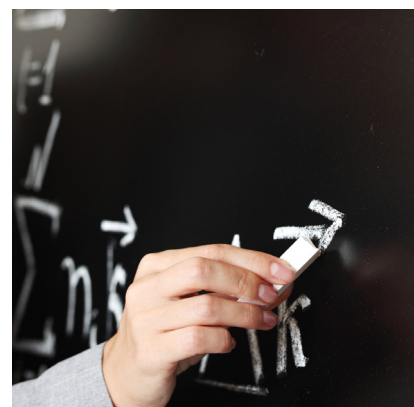


For non-degree advanced programs for experts, mentoring programs will be implemented, whereby mentors' groups consisting of experts such as former CEOs provide close support, from student counseling to curriculum development, operation, job information provision, connection with employment and follow-up management. The mentoring program operation committee will monitor the progress of the courses on a regular basis and provide advice on challenging issues for more systematic management.

All colleges across the nation may apply for participation in this scheme. Key evaluation items are learners recruitment plan, field-based practices and whether their courses execution system reflects the demands of local communities and industries, etc., so as to assess how effectively they can support employment and business start-up.

Achievements in 2013

In 2013, the total budget of the project was 27.5 billion won, out of which 21 billion won was earmarked for degree programs and 6 billion won was for non-degree programs. A total of 47 colleges took part in the project, with 34 colleges in degree programs and 13 colleges in non-degree programs. The main activity of the degree programs was to modify colleges' departments, organization and systems to make them more favorable to adult learners. The 34 participant colleges introduced 139 courses for adult learners and a total of 3,209 people attended degree courses. The non-degree programs were implemented for the first time in 2013. The shortfall of previous lifelong education at colleges





was that such education programs focused on humanities and liberal art and offered no distinctive values compared with the lifelong education programs provided by other types of institutions. In response, the non-degree programs overcame such limitations by urging colleges to tap into their own expertise to introduce and disseminate specialized education programs which satisfy demands of local communities and adult learners. A total of 64 programs were operated by 13 colleges and 1,709 people attended.

• • • Working–Learning Dual System

“Working and learning” is the key of the incumbent government’s policies. Both the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Education have implemented projects to pursue both working and learning in parallel. A case in point is the “working–learning dual system” implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources Development Service of Korea. Under the system, companies hire young job seekers as workers (learning workers) and let them go through systematic training for a long term (6 months~4 years) in order to cultivate practical workforce needed in industrial fields and their training result is evaluated and recognized as official qualification (or educational qualification) by the nation or concerned companies.



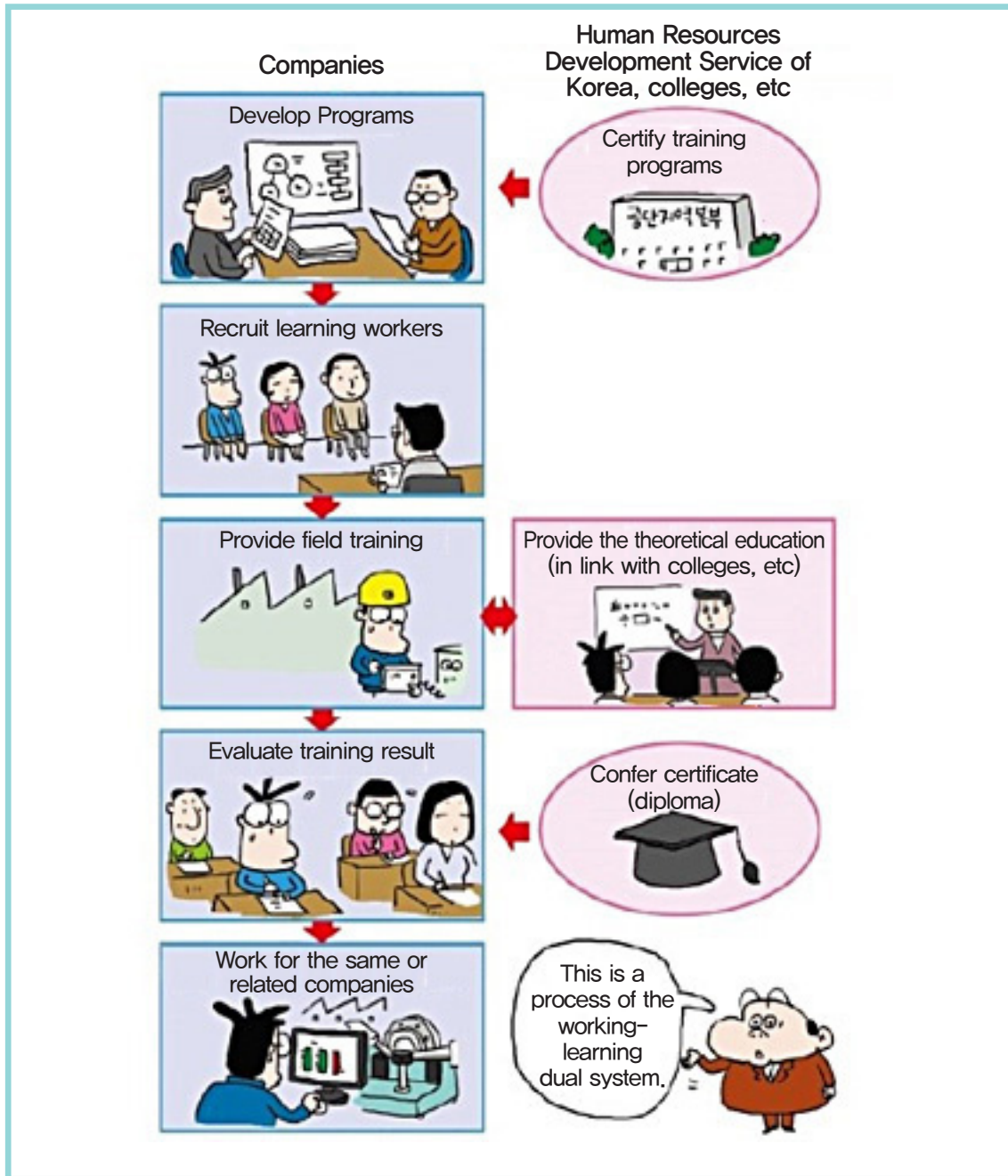
It gives young job seekers opportunities of both early employment and intensive training, and induces companies to adopt new training system and hiring culture centered on capability rather than building up a list of irrelevant qualifications. Companies which hope to implement this system should first



develop and operate training programs of their own as they are on the demand side of the labor market. Their training programs should focus on specialized job categories which require long-term training so that learning workers, who will be assigned to such jobs, can perform without issues.

Regardless of educational background, anyone to be hired by companies can participate in such training programs at the concerned companies and they should receive training in the capacity of hired employees. Companies evaluate the learning workers during and after the training period. Workers whose test score exceeds certain level receive a certificate, license or educational diploma, and then receive employment treatment according to their training performances. The procedures of the working-learning dual system are as follows;





[Figure 2] Procedures of the working-learning dual system

〈Source : Homepage of the Ministry of Employment and Labor of Korea
www.moel.go.kr 「Guidelines on the working-learning dual system」〉



Companies choose to implement the working-learning dual system can receive various support from the Ministry of Employment and Labor as follows;

- Grant annual subsidy to each company
- Support the establishment of field-based training systems
 - development of dual programs
 - production of teaching materials for field-based training
 - education to reinforce training capability
 - trainers' (professors for field-based training) allowance
 - administrative work allowance to HRD personnel
- Training (Off-JT, S-OJT) expenses
- Labor costs
- Meal · lodging costs

Through the project, companies can receive financial support from the government such as training expense and cultivate talented workers they need, with reduced financial burdens for re-training. In addition, they can enhance workers' job performances and productivity in a shorter term compared with OJT (On-the-Job Training), by implementing systematic training programs. It is also possible for the companies to secure competent workers ahead of others and cultivate them into talents with practical skills required by the companies themselves. At the same time, young job seekers can land jobs early without having to build up the list of qualifications irrelevant to practical job competency. Rather, they can learn practical knowledge and skills through work experiences and practices in industrial fields. After completing such training programs, they can upgrade job career through continuous development of vocational competency in the concerned industrial fields. This project was implemented in 2014 for the first time and as of March 2014, 240 learning workers are taking these programs at 68 companies. More recently,



104 companies are additionally selected to join the project and they are planning to hire 710 learning workers.

• • • Conclusion

The government's initiative to promote college-based lifelong learning cannot be implemented solely by certain lifelong education units of colleges but it should also engage local communities and industries. At the same time, colleges are required to modify existing curriculums, services, school regulations and systems in an overall manner to support adult learners. Lifelong education should be the key principle of the mid-to-long-term development plan for colleges. As this project makes progress over time, it is expected that more and more colleges will establish mid-to-long-term development plans within the big framework of lifelong education. Furthermore, the current High Education Act and related systems, which are centered on college education for school age students, will be improved.

In the same context, the working-learning dual system will also contribute to building a society of lifelong learning by inducing companies to take the lead in providing training courses, including field-based education, and enable learning workers to pursue both working and learning in parallel.



References

Human Resources Development Service of Korea. (2013). Public notice to invite companies to apply for “Working–Learning Dual System in 2014”, No. 2013–136. (the 1st phase) (in Korean).

Human Resources Development Service of Korea. (2014). Press release on the public notice to invite industrial organizations (SC) to apply for the “Working–Learning Dual System” to be led by industries. Retrieved from <http://hrdc.hrdkorea.or.kr/hrdc/139364> on February 10, 2014 (in Korean).

Ministry of Education. (2013). The 2013 master plan of the project to promote College–Based Lifelong Learning System (in Korean).

Ministry of Education, & National Institute for Lifelong Education. (2013). 2011 · 2012 Lifelong Education White Paper (in Korean).

Ministry of Education, & National Institute for Lifelong Education. (2014). 2013 Lifelong Education White Paper (in Korean).

Ministry of Employment and Labor. “Working–Learning Dual System.” Retrieved from www.moel.go.kr on March 14, 2014 (in Korean).



© National Institute for
Lifelong Education (NILE)

Visit :
eng.nile.or.kr

For more information,
contact :

Office of Global Lifelong
Education Relations
(global@nile.or.kr)